REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the Office Action dated October 21, 2003, are respectfully requested.

I.   Telephone Interview

Applicants' representatives thank the Examiner for his time during the January 14, 2004, telephone interview, during which aspects of the invention were discussed in light of the cited references and proposed amendments were identified.

II.   Drawings

Formal drawings are submitted concurrently herewith.

III.   Amendments

Claim 1 is amended to recite "establishing a game state on a game engine running on the server, wherein the game engine includes a protocol handler that supports multiple content protocols simultaneously and facilitates communication between the multiple client devices and the game engine." Support for this amendment is found in the Specification at, for example, pages 19 and 20, paragraphs 67 and 68.

Claim 1 is further amended to recite "wherein the first client device and the game engine communicate using a first protocol" and "wherein the second client device and the server communicate using a second protocol that is distinct from the first." Support for this amendment is found in the Specification at, for example, page 11, paragraphs 34 and 35.

Dependent claims 3 and 4 are amended so that they are consistent with independent claim 1.

Claim 7 is amended to recite "establishing a protocol handler at a server." Claim 7 is further amended to recite that the server supports multiple content protocols simultaneously "via the protocol handler." Support for these amendments is found in the Specification at, for example, page 19, paragraphs 64 and 65.

Claim 11 is amended to recite "establishing a game state for the game via a player component associated with the user." Claim 11 is further amended to recite that the identifying information transmitted to the server "is used by the protocol handler at the server, and wherein the protocol handler facilitates communication with multiple client devices each having a distinct device type." Support for these amendments is found in the Specification at, for example, page 19, paragraphs 64 and 65 and pages 19 and 20, paragraphs 67 and 68.

Claim 14 is amended to recite that identifying information transmitted to the server "is used by a protocol handler at the server, and wherein the protocol handler facilitates communication with multiple client devices each having a distinct platform." Support for this amendment is found in the Specification at, for example, for example, page 19, paragraphs 64 and 65 and pages 19 and 20, paragraphs 67 and 68.

Claim 17 is amended to recite a protocol handler component that "facilitates communication with multiple client devices, and wherein at least some of the multiple client devices communicate using distinct protocols." Support for this amendment is found in the Specification at, for example, for example, page 19, paragraphs 64 and 65 and pages 19 and 20, paragraphs 67 and 68.

IV.   Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

A.   The Applied Art

Claims 1-5 and 7-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,527,641 to Sinclair et al. ("Sinclair") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,470,180 to Kotzin et al. ("Kotzin").

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sinclair in view of Kotzin as applied to claims 1-5 and 7-19 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,890,963 to Yen ("Yen").

B.   Analysis

Current games for connected devices, such as those described in Sinclair and Kotzin, do not have sophisticated multi-user or multi-session capability. For example, a

typical multi-user game requires all users in the game to be connected simultaneously. (See Specification at page 2, paragraph 5.) If a user drops his or her connection, that user loses his or her place in the game. (*Id.*) This problem makes multi-user games less engrossing and less appealing. (*Id.*) In addition, current games do not allow for users on different platforms (e.g., mobile phone, palmtop computer, etc.) to play in the same game or against each other because of differences in the platforms. (*Id.*)

While Sinclair addresses the problem of incorporating a rich gaming environment into games played on mobile devices having limited user interfaces, Sinclair does not describe applicants' claimed multi-player or multi-session gaming environment, which addresses some of the problems described above. For example, while Sinclair describes the possibility of resuming a saved game and saving a game state at any time, Sinclair does not describe doing this in the context of a multi-player game. (See Sinclair, Figure 17 and associated textual description.) In addition, Sinclair does not provide any description related to resuming a saved game on a new device, let alone a new device using a different protocol or having a different platform.

Further, while Kotzin addresses problems related to limited bandwidth and discusses the possibility of providing games that can be played on a range of devices, Kotzin does not discuss any type of multi-player or multi-session gaming environment.

Even when viewed in combination, neither Kotzin's range of devices nor Sinclair's interactive gaming environment nor any of the other cited references teach or suggest applicants' technique as recited in amended claims 1-19. For example, neither Kotzin nor Sinclair, whether viewed alone or in combination, teach or suggest "establishing a game state on a game engine running on the server, wherein the game engine includes a protocol handler that supports multiple content protocols simultaneously and facilitates communication between the multiple client devices and the game engine," as recited in claim 1 as amended.
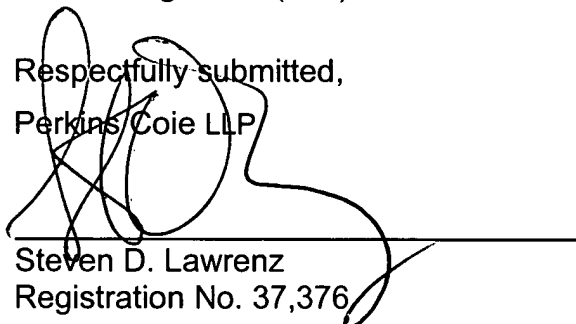
Likewise, neither Kotzin nor Sinclair, whether viewed alone or in combination, teach or suggest establishing "a protocol handler" at the server that allows the server to "support multiple content protocols simultaneously via the protocol handler" (e.g., claim

7) and/or "facilitates communication with multiple client devices" each device having a distinct device type/platform (e.g., claims 11 and 14).

In addition, neither Kotzin nor Sinclair, whether viewed alone or in combination, teach or suggest a protocol handler component that maintains a game state and "facilitates communication with multiple client devices, wherein at least some of the multiple client devices communicate using distinct protocols," as recited in claim 19 as amended.

V. <u>Conclusion</u>

Overall, none of the applied references, either singly or in any motivated combination, teach or suggest the features recited in independent claims 1, 7, 11, 14, and 17, and thus such claims are allowable. Because these independent claims are allowable, based on at least the above reasons, the claims that depend from them are likewise allowable. In view of the foregoing, the claims pending in the application comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and patentably define over the applied art. A Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-6373.

Respectfully submitted,
Perkins Coie LLP

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Steven D. Lawrenz
Registration No. 37,376

Correspondence Address:
Customer No. 25096
Perkins Coie LLP
P.O. Box 1247
Seattle, Washington 98111-1247
(206) 359-8000